

Training helps employees get the most out of Office 2007

Staff Development is working hard to make sure the college transition to Office 2007 offers maximum pleasure and minimum pain.

It's offering all employees convenient orientation, training and even one-on-one support on the improved Microsoft office software – including Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Access – that has features that streamline and simplify common computer tasks – saving time and trouble.

In September, the college replaced Office 2003 with the 2007 version in all the student labs, classrooms, and in the Learning Resource Center labs. It's now installing Office 2007 on all employee computers in a department-by-department process that will be completed by September 2010.

While many people are comfortable using existing software, the new 2007 suite has some big advantages that make learning to use properly important, says Matt Clarke, who is leading college training.

"Office 2007 is more visual than 2003. They've reduced steps and made it easier to use," he says.

The software offers a host of new features including the ability to instantly preview changes to the look of documents, easily create bibliographies in different styles, and more quickly convert documents into pdfs.

Clarke is holding training sessions for staff whose departments are being converted to Office 2007, as well as answering calls from any perplexed employees on an Office 2007 hotline (ext. 4870). "A common question is "Where is the print button?", he says.

Apart from learning the new locations for certain functions, training at the appropriate level can help employees get the most from the software. Most employees typically only use a small percentage of the capability of the software and often don't know about shortcuts that allow them to accomplish more in less time, he says.

"People often overestimate their ability with the program then in training they discover what they don't know," says Clarke.



Matt Clarke of the Staff Development Department helps employees learn the advantages of Microsoft Office 2007 in the new training lab at Casa Loma. In the coming months the new software will be installed on computers throughout the college – replacing Office 2003.

Students welcome college e-mail

Having a George Brown College e-mail address is a dream come true for Meisha Harris.

Starting this semester the college is giving Harris – and all other students – e-mail addresses that will ease and speed communication between students, their teachers, and the college.

"I'll use it all the time," says Harris, a second year Hotel Management student. "It looks a lot more professional."

Students and college faculty and staff – who collectively number more than 80,000 annually – have all been given new e-mail addresses that end with

mail.georgebrown.ca. For faculty and staff the new accounts supplement rather than replace their existing georgebrown.ca e-mail – but mail from one can be forwarded to the other so employees only need to check one account.

Up to now faculty who wanted to e-mail their classes had to manually collect private student e-mails from Banner, the college's student information system, or pass around a piece of paper in class. Now, using the new web-based Microsoft Exchange e-mail system, they can select their classes by class code and communicate with students individually or as a group anytime they want and wherever they have internet access.



NEAR UPSET IN STAFF VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT: A plucky foursome almost upset a four-year winning streak in the Staff Volleyball Tournament on Dec. 2 at St. James Campus. The final see-saw match pitted the four-person team from Business, Arts and Design (top photo, Team B.A.D. – from left William Rose, Candice Todd, Al Petersoo and Tulsí Dharell) against the powerful Student Affairs team (photo above, from left top row Paul Schortemeyer, Kim Vance, Seyhmus Yigit, Diana McIntyre and Kevin Lin, middle row Bob Eichwald and Kate Gies, bottom row Michael Brewer and Mehmet Yavuz) who were hungry for a fourth year as champions. Student Affairs held the lead for the majority of the final game, but Team B.A.D. kept in close range always trailing by only one or two points. The foursome finally took the lead near the end of the match and needed just one more point to take the trophy away from the defending champions, but Student Affairs held on and won the final match 27-26. The tournament was a huge success with 18 teams registered and almost 200 people in the gymnasium as participants or spectators. Team names were as creative as some of the plays: including Triples Triples R Back (from Student Affairs), E-Block and Then Some (Bookstore), and Spiked Spirits (Hospitality). Special honours went to the following teams: Best Foursome – Team B.A.D.; Best Dressed – E-Block and then some; Most Diverse Team – SA Spirit (Student Association); Most Spirited Team – Community Services; and Most Composed Team – ERES 1 (Educational Resources).

Office 2007 training (continued from page 1)

Staff training is offering three levels of 2-hour workshops: Transition, Intermediate, or Advanced.

Transition – or basic – training is for people who are unfamiliar with the Office 2007 suite of programs. Sessions are being co-ordinated with Office 2007 installation – so while Information Technology employees install the new software on computers, employees simultaneously learn how to use it in the newly opened 15-station Office 2007 training lab at Casa Loma.

The workshop introduces the basic functions of the software, and teaches employees how to quickly locate commonly used functions and modify a desktop so they can easily access those functions quickly and easily. Included in this session is training on the operation of SMART rooms.

For employees with some working familiarity with Office 2007 Clarke suggests the first step they take is to go online to do a 20-minute assessment of their Office 2007 skills – that will tell them which workshop would help them most.

You can arrange for a self-assessment by contacting Matthew Clarke matthewclarke@georgebrown.ca or by calling Matthew at extension 4870.

Intermediate training is designed to introduce employees to the new features embedded in Office 2007 Suite that are designed to save time and effort.

If employees score more than 80 per cent or better on the self-assessment individual, customized advanced training sessions may be most appropriate. To arrange for advanced one-on-one training, contact Clarke.

There are also web training modules – found at <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/FX100565001033.aspx>. Clarke suggests employees take the self-assessment before engaging in the web-based training.

If, after all the training offered, you're still stumped give Clarke a call at ext. 4870 with your Office 2007 question and he'll get back to you within 24 hours. "People often say 'I've got a really stupid question,'" he says, "... but obviously it's not a stupid question."

College e-mail (continued from page 1)

Students can do the same – sending their teachers or classmates e-mail – with all college related communication segregated in their college e-mail account rather than mixed in with personal communication.

George Brown College Senior Management Committee is encouraging both employees and students to use the system for all official college academic business – from submitting assignments to official notices from academic departments and the Registrar.

"It is our intention that eventually the new student e-mail system will be the only form of official communication with students," says Continuous

Learning Dean Colin Simpson, who co-chaired the group that developed the e-mail system with Karen

Thomson, Vice-President of Marketing and Strategic Enrolment Management. "We are making the faculty and students use of the system our first priority. Phase two will see managed use of email messages for the entire student body.

Students will keep their George Brown e-mail addresses for a year after they leave college.

More information about the new system is available on Insite at <http://insite.georgebrown.ca/email/>

This is our last paper newsletter: employees prefer News by e-mail

Most George Brown employees like to get college news delivered fresh ... to their e-mail inboxes.

They like being able to catch up when and where they have the time – first thing in the morning at work, between classes, or at home using web access.

That's why this issue of George Brown News is the last one to be printed on paper and distributed around the college by hand. Starting in February an electronic version will be sent every month to all employees with college e-mail addresses. They can then choose to read it on their computer screens or print it on their office or home printers.

An electronic version of the News has been available for the past year as a pilot project – and during that time more than 240 employees opted to subscribe to it. A 2009 survey about employee communications found that a large majority of employees who responded preferred to get George Brown News electronically.

While the newsletter won't change format, an electronic version of the newsletter will allow employees to read more about topics that interest them or go to web-based photo galleries by following live web links in the newsletter.

Managers with staff who do not have college e-mail addresses or computer access are asked to make the newsletter available by printing the needed copies from their office printers and a limited print run will be made available.

The change to electronic distribution will save time, money, energy – and a significant number of trees. Although the newsletter is currently being printed on paper with 25 percent post-consumer recycled content – the switch will do much more and eliminate the production of 20,000 ink-saturated 11 by 17 inch pieces of heavy paper every year.

George Brown News has been published 10 times a year (from September to June) for the past 27 years. Over the years it has changed names; it was City College News until 2006, and formats – for several years it was a tabloid newspaper and has moved from black and white to full colour. Back issues of George Brown News starting in 2003 are available on the Marketing and Communications pages of Insite.



ALUMNI CELEBRATE – MARITIME STYLE: A recent Alumni lunch had a maritime theme with fiddle music, seafood chowder, and Nova Scotia beer. Here Chef School students (from left) Devin Shanks, Loretta Paulmert, and Hyun Jung Kim show off the winning seafood chowders they created that were featured at the lunch in late November at the Duke of Westminster Pub in First Canadian Place. Alumni also sampled Alexander Keith's beers and toasted the a successful fundraising effort that teamed up the brewer, the Duke chain of pubs, and parent company Imago restaurants, to raise almost \$1,900 for the college's Yes Chef! campaign to support development of the Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts.



SENIORS ASSOCIATION HELPS STUDENTS: The George Brown Seniors Association recently presented bursaries to Activation Co-ordinator Gerontology students (from left) Corrie Kennedy, Daphne Bustamante, and Jen Homer. The Association also provides a popular range of courses and cultural excursions to its 600 members. For more information go to: <http://www.georgebrown.ca/seniors/index.aspx#maincontent>

President Anne Sado



By now I hope that virtually all staff are aware that George Brown College is in the process of developing a new strategic plan for 2020. Our current five year plan takes us to the close of the current academic year. Given the timelines required to develop new capacity and capabilities, we thought it was time to start planning over a longer time horizon.

The process of establishing a new strategic plan that will serve the long-term interests of the college and the community we serve has included consultations with faculty, administrators and support staff, most recently with a college-wide online web survey in December. Earlier in the year, a series of focus groups were held to probe the views of external stakeholders and partners as well as staff on a number of questions, including the future vision and role of George Brown College. I am happy to say that we have gained a great deal of valuable input and insights. You know our college best and are in the best position to help identify the special capabilities

we need in order to leverage George Brown's strengths in the future.

As creative as some of the input we've received has been, the opportunity to incorporate it into the next stage of planning will largely depend on the 'environmental context,' or the key realities we face. Among these realities are the forecasted shortage of a skilled workforce in many fields and the reality that a large majority of our future labour market growth will be met through immigration. Given this reality, it is crucial that we continue to build the necessary training infrastructure and expertise to both support and shape the labour force, including smoothing the progress of new Canadians into the labour market.

While anticipating changes in the makeup of our students, we must also be able to adapt to the changing needs of students. More and more students are seeking flexible options between multiple programs and/or institutions when working towards their postsecondary credentials. We must be part of creating a transparent postsecondary system with clear credit transfer and credential recognition opportunities. Allowing greater degree granting ability for colleges would also meet the overwhelming demand for post-secondary education, especially in the GTA.

Of course, this is not the first time I have shared these realities with our college community. In addition to improving access to and participation rates in post-secondary education, these are key areas we have already begun addressing through

some specific programs and initiatives. What makes them especially significant at this point is the role they will play in shaping George Brown's future in ten years.

To put this in perspective, in ten years many of the jobs we are preparing our students for today will not exist, or at least not in their current form, yet our success depends on our ability to prepare students for employment. With Ontario's economy undergoing structural change in the short term, potential for Ministry of Training College and Universities to redesign the PSE system in the long term, and the dynamics of the

workplace; we know that flexibility and adaptability need to be built into our long term plans.

The next step will be a presentation of our analysis and preliminary recommendations at the Board of Governors annual planning retreat at the end of January. This will give us further direction in our planning process. Having collected inputs from across the college community and from our key stakeholders, I am confident that in the end our plan will allow George Brown to not only adapt to the key realities, but find ways of developing new strengths that set us apart.

GREEN SPOT

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Make it happen.

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